We've finished the May 17, 2016 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of May 17, 2016. The forecasts are posted at: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120up.

Forecast Summary:

The projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 46 percent on the Tule River to 94 percent on the Mokelumne and Stanislaus rivers. All forecasts decreased except those for the Kaweah and Kern rivers which remained the same as last week. Regionally, the forecasts for both the Sacramento and San Joaquin River regions remain about 85 percent of average and the Tulare Lake Region is near 65 percent.

Runoff:

Through the first 17 days of May, no river's flow is greater than the average May rate. The Trinity, Mokelumne, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers are flowing greater than 80 percent of their respective monthly average. The Sacramento and Feather rivers are flowing around 65 percent of their monthly average. The Tule and Kern rivers are flowing at around 42 percent of their average.

Precipitation:

The precipitation over the Sierra during May is below normal.

Region/Index	WY accumulated precipitation in percent of average (inches) through May 17, 2016	May 1-17, 2016 accumulated precipitation in percent of average (inches) total for May
Northern Sierra 8-Station Index	119 (55.6 inches)	48 (1.0 inches)
San Joaquin 5-Station Index	103 (39.2 inches)	33 (0.6 inches)
Tulare Basin 6-Station Index	93 (25.5 inches)	18 (0.2 inches)

Snowpack:

The snow continues to melt off at a strong and steady pace in most mountainous regions of the state. The snowpack as of the morning of May 17, 2016 stands at the following (based on snow sensors):

Region	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)	% of Average (Apr 1)	% of Average (May 17)
Northern	4.3	15	33
Central	6.8	24	43
Southern	3.9	15	26
Statewide	5.2	18	34

Of the total 129 active snow sensors in the network, 20 are not functioning properly and have been "shut off". Out of the 109 remaining sensors deemed to be functioning well or fairly well, about one-third are still reporting snow. A majority of these are at higher elevations or north-facing aspects.

Weather and Climate Outlooks:

The 6-day weather forecast predicts precipitation each of the six days primarily over the northern and central Sierras. Today, no more than 0.1 inch of total precipitation is expected over the northern Sierras. Friday is expected to be the wettest day in the six-day period with no more than 0.75 inch over the

northern Sierras and tailing off into the central Sierras with no more than 0.25 inch. No more than 0.1 inch of precipitation is expected over the Sierras on Saturday. On Sunday, no more than 0.25 inch of precipitation is expected over the northern Sierras. On Monday and Tuesday, no more than 0.1 inch of precipitation is expected over the Sierras. Freezing levels are at their highest today around 9,000-10,000 feet over the northern and central Sierras and 11,000 feet over the southern Sierras. Freezing levels are expected to drop tomorrow to near 6,000-7,000 feet over the Sierras then rise over the last four days of the six-day forecast.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) one-month outlook for June, issued May 19, indicates increased chances of above normal temperatures statewide. The same forecast indicates equal chances of above or below normal precipitation statewide.

The CPC three-month (June-July-August) outlook, issued May 19, indicates increased chances of above normal temperatures statewide. The same forecast indicates equal chances of above or below normal precipitation statewide.

El Niño is present and is weakening. Positive equatorial sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies continue across the central and east-central Pacific Ocean. La Niña is favored to develop during the Northern Hemisphere summer 2016, with about a 75% chance of La Niña during the fall and winter 2016-17.

Next Update:

The next Bulletin 120 update for conditions as of May 24 will be available May 26. If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff.